



Willits Economic Localization The WELL Bucket

Volume 5 – Issue 4

July/August 2010

Schedule of Events

July & August 2010

July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 – 3 to 6 pm

Farmers Market

Bud Snider Park

July 1 – 5 to 9 pm

Hometown Celebration Downtown

July 4 – 11 am

Frontier Days Parade on Main St.

& BBQ at Recreation Grove

July 14 – 9:30 am

WELL CC Meeting

221 E. Lenore Ave

July 15 – 7 pm

Now & Then Film Series

“The Garbage Warrior”

Little Lake Grange (page 8)

July 25 – 8 to 11 am

Grange Pancake Breakfast

Little Lake Grange

July 29 – 7 pm

Free Public Program on Transition

Town Movement with Michael

Brownlee at Grange (page 6)

July 30 – August 1

Transition Town Initiative Training

Little Lake Grange (page 6)

August 5, 12, 19, 26 – 3 to 6 pm

Farmers Market

Bud Snider Park

August 8 – 5 pm

WELL General Meeting & Potluck

Little Lake Grange (page 8)

August 11 – 9:30 am

WELL CC

221 E. Lenore

August 14 – 9:45 am

WELL Farm & Garden Tour

Meet at Brookside Farm (page 1)

August 22 – 8 to 11 am.

Grange Pancake Breakfast

Little Lake Grange



WELL Farm & Garden Tour

Saturday, Aug. 14, 2010

The 5th annual farm tour sponsored by Willits Economic Localization (WELL) will **begin at 9:45 am at Brookside School Farm**, featuring six additional local farms with refreshments along the way, and offering lunch for sale in the afternoon at Golden Rule farm.

Here's an opportunity to see small-scale farms first-hand and to learn from master-gardeners how good food can be grown right here in Willits. Whether you're already gardening or would like to, you can learn what grows here, when and how to plant, and some of the challenges farmers face. View farms in progress (they're always in process), and ask your own garden questions.

A \$5 to \$20 donation is requested for adults, to cover refreshments and to benefit WELL; kids are free. We especially encourage families and youth to attend. Lunch is an extra cost - or bring your own. We recommend bringing some water, shade hat or parasol for the tour. Here's the schedule, with details about the farms on page 2:

- 9:45 Meet and tour at Brookside Farm
- 10:45 WISC Community Garden
- 11:30 Green Uprising Farm
- 12:15 Senior Center Garden
- 1:00 Dear Meadow Farm
- 1:45 Golden Rule Farm
- 2:15 Lunch at Golden Rule
- 3:15 Richard Jeske Orchard (Optional)

Continued on page 2

WELL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Videographer and a Tour Leader, separate positions, are needed for the Willits Water Conservation Program to document the program and provide tours. Contact Janice at janicevg@pacific.net.

Farm Tour continued from page 1

Farm #1 - Brookside Farm: Gather at 9:45, at north end of Spruce Street (off West Mendocino Ave.), take driveway to the right and proceed around the east & north perimeter of the school grounds to park near the farm. Hot drinks and refreshments will be provided, with the farm tour starting at 10:00.

The farm is a one acre, certified organic, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and education site at Brookside Elementary School. Now in its fourth year, Antonia Partridge has become farm manager, taking over from the founder, Jason Bradford. The farm also hosts an Agriculture Internship Program through Mendocino College that trains the next generation of farmers.

The farm distributes fresh produce to area residents and school cafeterias. Additionally, the farm incorporates hands-on activities for the K-2 grades at the elementary school and through after school and summer programs. Brookside Farm was begun under a grant from the Post Carbon Institute to specialize in reducing the fossil energy inputs to the food system, maximizing use of hand tools and renewable energy. Produce is made available year-round by growing storage crops and solar drying abundant summer vegetables.

Farm tour participants can form carpools from here to proceed to the rest of the gardens.

Farm #2 - WISC Community Garden: The Willits Community Garden is at the north-east corner of the Willits Integrated Service Center, 221 S. Lenore Street – just south of Recreation Grove Park.

The garden was started in 2007 by volunteer coordinators, David and Ursula Partch, but is now managed by Mason Giem, under grants from North Coast Opportunities. It has blossomed into a community center that empowers individuals and families to grow their own food and take an active step towards better health. There are 42 individual garden plots as well as supplemental planting space for the Brookside Farm, a sacred geometry garden bed, 19 fruit trees, native medicinal plants, and a 10,000 gallon rainwater capture tank.

Farm #3 - Green Uprising Farm: This third stop is at 2301 East Hill Road. Some snacks will be available here.

Green Uprising farmers Michael and Sara describe their extended-family farm as: "...five acres of old and new orchard, berry patch, and market gardens. Our new passive solar greenhouse will supply fresh greens throughout the winter. Though not 'certified organic,' we use traditional organic methods – no chemical fertilizers or pesticides, care for the soil and the larger environment, working with nature, not against her. We've been selling at the Willits Farmers Market for the last two years and occasionally at Mariposa Market. In addition, we have a small herd of milk goats. We're plagued by insufficient water, deer, aging trees, and an occasional gopher; but we're learning to cope with each of these." Michael is responsible for the gardens, Sara for the goats, but work is widely shared, and they enjoy the help of a series of Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOFers), volunteers who exchange work for room, board, and learning.

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TRANSITION TOWN SPEAKER "LIGHTS OUR FIRE"

In an inspired presentation on May 15th at the Grange, Michael Brownlee of Transition Colorado infused his audience with his passion and positive vision for the "transition." Brownlee explained that central to the Transition Town movement is the idea that a life without oil could in fact be far more enjoyable and fulfilling than the present. Quoting from the movement's UK founder Rob Hopkins, Brownlee enthused that "by shifting our mind-set we can actually recognize the coming post-cheap oil era as an opportunity rather than a threat, and design the future low carbon age to be thriving, resilient and abundant — somewhere much better to live than our current alienated consumer culture based on greed, war and the myth of perpetual growth." This transition, Brownlee explained, is personal as well as economic, social and political.

In explaining the origins and strategy of the Transition Town (now called the Transition Initiative) movement, Brownlee saluted Willits and WELL who led the way: "Everyone was watching what was happening in Willits back in 2004."

The Transition Initiative has adopted a structure with principles, policy, and training that assists communities so that each doesn't go through the, sometimes painful, rebirthing process away from current oil dependency towards a low-carbon, resilient way of working.

The Transition Town movement is not something new for those of us in Mendocino County, but builds on and gives a new and positive impetus to the work already done by WELL, CELL, GULP and other people and organizations working towards localization.

Following the presentation the audience stayed on another forty minutes to pose questions, offer insights, and ask "what's next" for themselves and our community.

A consensus later emerged that a Transition Initiative Public Meeting and Training should be offered countywide. The training would give us more tools to prepare for the change

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Brookside Farm

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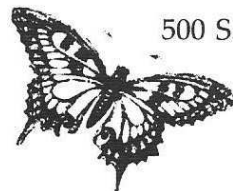
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Mary Anne Trevey

WELL Coordinating Committee Briefs

Co-Com Meeting of 5/12/10 – Summary

Eco-Tourism: Bill Bruneau presented ideas about Willits becoming a destination for young people interested in localization. Internships and classes could include sustainable farming, alternative energy, transportation, building, cooking courses; also offer activities for kids, cultural events, etc. Bill has reserved a “Sustainable Willits” website.

101 Bypass Alert: The CC approves sending an alert to our members and also taking a position raising our concerns about the scope/impacts of the Bypass project and relinquishment and urging consideration of other alternatives. (See article in this issue.)

Grants: New member Laura Roland is enthusiastic about seeking grants for education and environment. She will continue looking for possibilities.

Upcoming Events: The CC discussed and made plans for many events, most of which are reported elsewhere in this newsletter, including:

- The Michael Brownlee Transition Town Event on May 15,
- Red Wagon Project,
- Contra Dance,
- Redwood Ave. community garden,
- Frontiers Day activities,
- Farm Tour,
- Community Market/Harvest Fest, Sept. 19
- WELL Health Meeting, Oct. 17

Co-Com Meeting of 6/9/10 – Summary

The CC discussed follow-up on **Transition Town** planning, which seeks to broaden support for and re-energize the localization movement. See article in this newsletter.

We decided there should be another **WELL general meeting** to carry forth energy generated from the TT training and get community input on our next steps. That is now scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 8, 5pm potluck at the Grange.

The CC also continued planning for **upcoming events** (Farm Tour, Red Wagon project, Hometown Celebration), as well as discussing issues of the Bypass relinquishment and Redwood Ave. park (covered in separate articles).

A new **database** system has been installed; we will soon be trained in how to use it. A subcommittee will work on putting together a power point about WELL (and Transition Town) and scheduling outreach to groups.

Planning is underway on a WELL **Community Market/Harvest Fest** on Sept. 19. It's suggested that, in addition to private & non-profit booths, we schedule mini-presentations, maybe music, short films, face-painting, etc. for a full, festive event.

We also heard a report from the recent successful **Food Summit** in Ukiah. There are ideas for food-related businesses, a food policy council to advocate for policies to help local ag, etc. WELL can help educate & advocate on these issues.

Complete minutes will be posted on our website.

Farm Tour continued from page 2

Farm #4 - Senior Center Garden: This garden got its start in early 2009. The soil was inhospitable, so compost was brought in and an impressive on-site compost-making process was put into effect, creating beautiful, fertile soil. A drip system using well water was installed, and dedicated volunteers went to work. Almost all plants are started from Bountiful Gardens seeds in the greenhouse. Flowers have been planted throughout the garden, including hollyhocks and sunflowers along the perimeter to attract bees that pollinate crops.

In addition to many vegetables, there are grapevines and fruit trees, all fenced in thanks to the Willits Rotary Club. Produce helps feed hundreds through the Senior Center's meals-on-wheels program, Our Daily Bread and the Food Bank.

A short video will be shown and some refreshments provided indoors at the Senior Center.

Farm #5 - Dear Meadow Farm: Started in the spring of 2007, Dear Meadow Farm is a small, family owned organic farm perched on the moist, gentle north slope of a hill a couple miles south of Willits. According to father-daughter team Michael & Alexandria Curry, "We grow whatever we find does well at our elevation of about 1650 feet. Winter vegetables seem to do better than summer crops. We have had some success with garlic, chard, collards, kale, cabbage, lettuce, tomatillos, zucchini, and basil. We have to grow tomatoes inside a greenhouse."

Farm #6 - Golden Rule: Golden Rule Garden has been feeding the members of Ridgewood Ranch since the late 1960's. It has had many forms and practices but since 2000 has been a sister garden with Ecology Action, including research and training in the grow biointensive method. This method has allowed the garden to shrink from a few acres to just a little under an acre, while still growing enough food to feed its community with extra to share with community services (Our Daily Bread, The Senior Center). Food is also preserved for the winter.

According to garden manager Ellen Bartholomew, "Along with our abundant vegetables, we always grow grains: not just "ordinary" grains (lots of those), but we also experiment with unique and nutritious grains from all over the world that would work in our climate and improve health. We especially love quinoa!

"The garden also grows seeds for our local seed company, Bountiful Gardens. We enjoy sharing our beautiful growing space with our Ecology Action interns and apprentices who live across the street from our garden. We share farming information with them and hope to learn as much as we teach. We use a closed system of gardening with virtually no outside inputs, and our practices are beyond organic with the use of organic open-pollinated heirloom seeds."

Lunch at Golden Rule: After this day of enjoying farms and some light refreshments, it will be time to eat a hearty meal! Lunch will be provided at reasonable cost (\$8-10), or if you prefer, you can pack your own lunch. Some of the farmers will join us, and we can continue conversations about local gardening.

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REDWOOD AVENUE GARDEN: COMMUNITY ASSET!

Good news: It's been saved! Willits City Council voted 3-2 on June 9th to rescind their September vote which had required the garden, adjacent to the private property at 284 Redwood Avenue, be removed. Jason and Kristen Bradford had established this garden on city property with city approval but there was no formal agreement or easement.

This is a significant victory for the power of community. Councilmember Victor Hanson worked with a number of garden supporters to develop a solution that satisfied his concerns - primarily that the City-owned garden be clearly separated by a low fence from the property at 284 Redwood Avenue. About 20 volunteers had several work parties to clear old structures and debris from the City land, build an attractive fence, and weed and beautify the garden.

The garden is now a community asset! There are even benches to sit and picnic. Go by and see it for yourselves.

Thanks to the many folks who donated time and/or money and those who've volunteered to keep maintaining the garden. Judy Luria has volunteered to coordinate on-going maintenance. If you'd like to help, contact Judy at 459-6619 or judya@pacific.net.

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Farm #7 (optional) – East Hill House: Now that you've relaxed and been fed, your carpools can stop at East Hill House on your way back to town, especially if you're interested in the art of growing fruit trees.

This is the home of Richard Jeske and Jacqueline Morninglight and the business East Hill House Herbals. The garden tour will primarily focus on the orchard. Richard is an expert in grafting, pruning, and all aspects of tending to fruit trees. His demonstration backyard orchard demonstrates that a lot of different fruit can be grown in a limited space by close planting, multiple grafting, and summer pruning. This ladderless orchard has apples, pears, Asian pears, plums, peaches (a good crop this year!). In addition, Richard is growing over 150 varieties of table grapes and is experimenting with several varieties of goji berries.

Jacqueline has a medicinal herb garden, a kitchen herb garden, and emphasizes useful plants as ornamentals. The gardens have been in continuous development since the couple moved there in 1981.

A map and directions will be provided at our jump-off point at Brookside. For more information, contact Madge at 459-6675 or mstrong@willitsonline.com.

CALIFORNIA GRANGE RENAISSANCE

This summer's issue of the California Grange News depicts a pair of forty-some year old organic farmers on its cover with the heading "Are these the faces of the new American Farmer?" The issue, devoted to the Grange Renaissance, features an article on broadband internet access, community gardens, an industrial hemp festival, organic crops as the natural choice, and Grangestock, a festival of 60's and 70's music played by a dozen bands in Orangevale. Little Lake Grange features prominently in this issue as well.

The publication reflects the openness and humor of the new State Grange Master Bob McFarland whose "On the Road" column takes us on a monthly tour of Granges throughout California where everything from toilet races to ladybug pamphlets to historic buildings is covered.

"The Grange Renaissance manifests itself in halls across California. We are renewing our vows to our agriculture heritage and celebrating diversity and the arts," Bob writes.

To learn more about the State Granges go to www.californiagrango.org.



To join the Little Lake Grange you need to be sponsored by a current member. Contact Membership Coordinator Lanny Cotler at 459-9550 for more information.

Transition continued from page 2

and shocks that are coming our way (and that have already made themselves felt)—not only to survive but to do so in creative ways that enrich us and our society.

Transition Initiative Training

Facilitated by Michael Brownlee and Lynette Marie Hanthorn, the training will be in Willits at the Little Lake Grange, **July 30 through August 1, 2010**. This training, though in Willits, is intended for all of Mendocino County. It is appropriate for anyone from the newcomer just discovering the movement to the initiated who want to add more tools to their cache or want to be re-energized for the struggle.

If two people from each community take the training, then their town can be considered part of the Transition Town Initiative and will be poised to deliver training to others in the community.

The weekend training costs \$200, which includes lunch. The number of participants is limited, so be sure to reserve your place early. For more information **call Annie Waters at 459-6362**.

Michael Brownlee and Lynette Marie Hanthorn are the co-founders of Transition Colorado, the first officially-recognized Transition initiative in North America.. Both are certified trainers for the International Transition Network.

'Transition Town '
... is creating a vibrant & sustainable community

Thursday, July 29th, 7pm
Little Lake Grange
291 School St

With MICHAEL BROWNLEE, a dynamic and inspiring speaker !

A Free Public Event

Info at 459- 6362

THE BYPASS – IS IT A DONE DEAL?

By Madge Strong

Not quite. The City's input seems to have been "bypassed" for now (see below). On June 30, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) heard from a number of local citizens with major concerns about this Bypass design, as well as from some local officials favoring the Bypass. In the end, it came down to the need for jobs, not the merits of the project. About 100 unemployed construction workers packed the hearing room. The CTC approved allocating \$126 million to CalTrans to proceed with the project, conditional on permits from the Regional Water Board and Corps of Engineers. To meet deadlines for receiving federal highway funds, these agency permits must be completed by late August. We will post addresses and latest news on the WELL website.

During the past month, WELL submitted letters to both the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the City. We noted that the Bypass, as currently planned, involves major adverse impacts on wetlands and streams in the Valley. It's important to note that the funding is only for Phase 1, which would have almost all of the impacts of a 4-lane freeway but only complete two lanes. Phase 2 would likely never happen.

To the City, our comments stressed the impacts on the City of relinquishment - the City taking over responsibility for Main St. north of the Highway 20 intersection - that would occur after a Bypass is completed. Main Street in both directions will continue to handle a lion's share of regional traffic, since there is no Highway 20 interchange from the Bypass. Conditions at the Sherwood Road intersection would be worsened. Safety issues of a 2-lane, high-speed freeway, with limited access, could also affect local emergency responders.

At the Willits City Council meeting June 23, with a packed hall and after many people spoke to raise concerns, the Council failed, on a 2-3 vote, to adopt any position regarding relinquishment. For months an ad hoc committee of City representatives had been negotiating, trying to get information and concessions from CalTrans, with little success. CalTrans, meanwhile, had pressed the City to sign a vague agreement to "cooperate" on relinquishment, but a few days before said it wasn't necessary to do at this time. While Councilmembers Greg Kanne and Holly Madrigal favored informing CalTrans and the CTC of major objections, the other Councilmembers (Bruce Burton, Larry Stranske and Victor Hanson) felt no action should be taken, instead giving the City more time to negotiate, presumably while Bypass construction proceeds.

Stay tuned, or contact Madge at mstrong@willitsonline.com for latest news.

ELECTRIC CARS AGAIN

The San Francisco building code will soon be revised to require that new structures be wired for car chargers. Across the street from City Hall, some drivers are already plugging converted hybrids into a row of charging stations. In nearby Silicon Valley, companies are ordering workplace charging stations in the belief that their employees will be first in line when electric cars begin arriving in showrooms. And at the headquarters of PG&E, utility executives are preparing "heat maps" of neighborhoods that they fear may overload the power grid in their exuberance for electric cars. As auto-makers prepare to introduce the first mass-market electric cars late this year, it is increasingly evident that the cars will get their most serious tryout in just a handful of places. In cities like San Francisco, Portland, and San Diego, a combination of green consciousness and enthusiasm for new technology seems to be stirring public interest in the cars. The first wave of electric car buying is expected to begin around December, when Nissan introduces the Leaf, a five-passenger electric car that will have a range of 100 miles on a fully charged battery and be priced for the middle-class.



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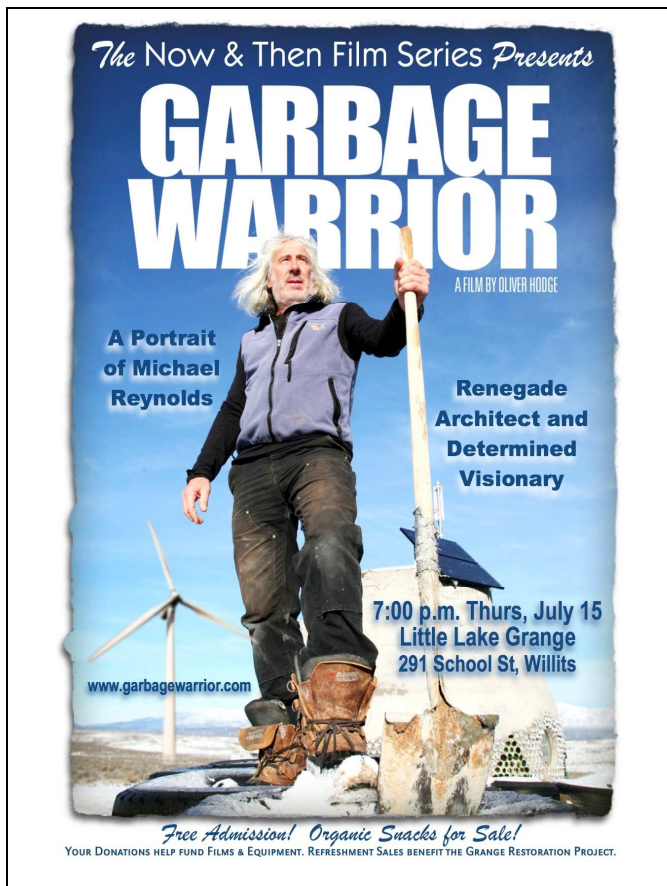
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WELL GENERAL MEETING & POTLUCK

Sunday, August 8th

5 p.m.

(note time change for summer)

Discussion on Transition Movement and Willits Economic Localization. How do they fit and what are WELL's next steps?

Bring potluck dish to share, utensils and plate.

"Humans are capable of a unique trick, creating realities by first imagining them, by experiencing them in their minds. As soon as we sense the possibility of a more desirable world, we begin behaving differently, as though that world is starting to come into existence, as though, in our mind's eye, we are already there. The dream becomes an invisible force which pulls us forward. By this process it begins to come true. The act of imagining somehow makes it real. And what is possible in art becomes thinkable in life".

-Brian Eno

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Willits Economic Localization

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